

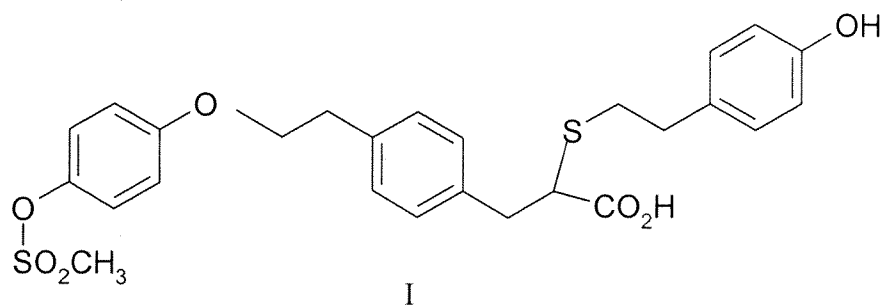
**IN THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listing of claims in the application.

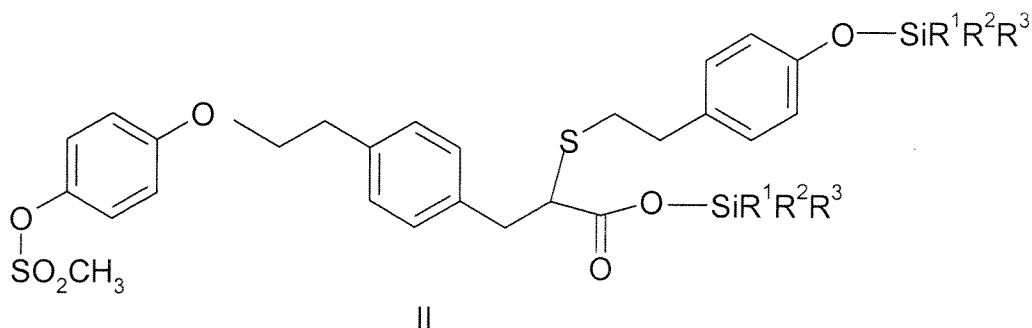
**Listing of claims:**

Claims 1-5 (cancelled).

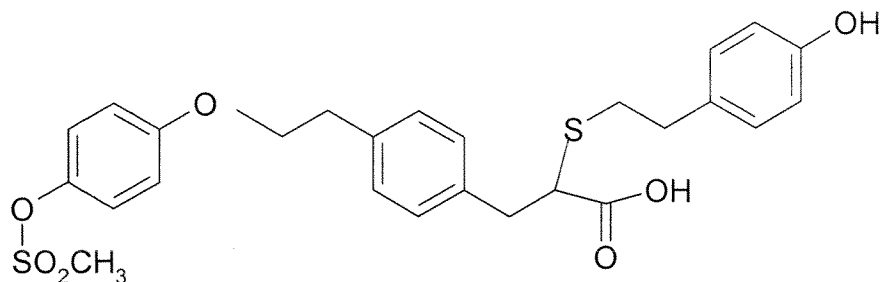
Claim 6 (**currently amended**): A process for the preparation of substantially racemic 2-{[2-(4-hydroxyphenyl)ethyl]thio}-3-[4-(2-{4-[(methylsulfonyl)oxy]phenoxy}ethyl)-phenyl]propanoic acid according to claim 4 comprising reacting a compound of formula I



enriched in one enantiomer with a chlorosilane of formula  $\text{ClSiR}^1\text{R}^2\text{R}^3$  in which  $\text{R}^1$ ,  $\text{R}^2$ , and  $\text{R}^3$  independently represent a  $\text{C}_{1-6}$  alkyl group or aryl in the presence of a nitrogenous base in the presence of an inert solvent at a temperature in the range of 0 to  $150^\circ\text{C}$  to give a compound of formula II

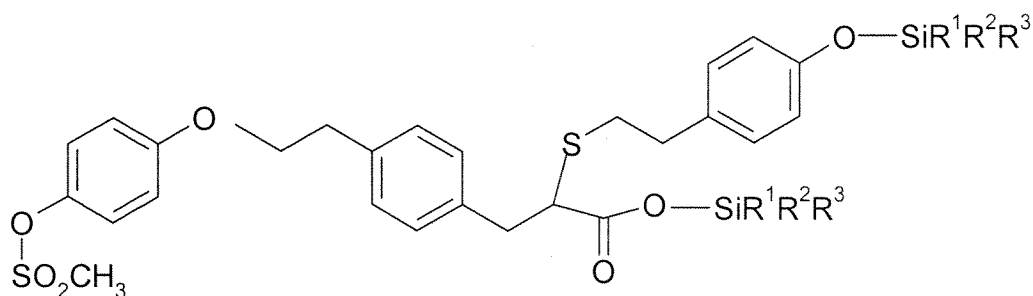


in which  $\text{R}^1$ ,  $\text{R}^2$ , and  $\text{R}^3$  are previously defined which is hydrolysed to give a racemic compound of formula III



III

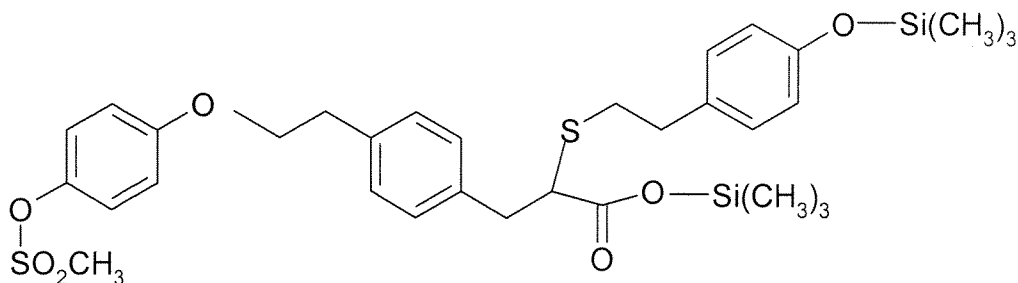
Claim 7 (**original**): A compound of formula II



II

wherein  $\text{R}^1$ ,  $\text{R}^2$ , and  $\text{R}^3$  independently represent a  $\text{C}_{1-6}$  alkyl group or aryl.

Claim 8 (**original**): A compound of formula IV



IV

Claim 9 (**new**): A process according to claim 6 wherein the chlorosilane is selected from: chlorotriethylsilane, chlorodimethyl*tert*butylsilane, chlorotriphenylsilane and chlorodimethylphenyl silane.

Claim 10 (**new**): A process according to claim 6 wherein the chlorosilane is chlorotrimethylsilane.

Claim 11 (**new**): A process according to claim 6 wherein the nitrogenous base is selected from 1,8 diazabicyclo[5.4.0] undec-7-ene, a trialkylamine, an optionally substituted pyridine or an optionally substituted imidazole.

Claim 12 (**new**): A process according to claim 11 wherein the nitrogenous base is 1,8 diazabicyclo[5.4.0] undec-7-ene.